

JPL

IGIUGIG VILLAGE COUNCIL

P.O. Box 4008

Igiugig, AK 99613

Phone.: (907)533-3211

Fax: (907)533-3217

May 10, 2000

Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation
Attn: Executive Committee via Robert Clark
P.O. Box 130
Dillingham, AK 99576

Subject: Request for Comments to the Department of Transportation regarding Airport
Lengths

Dear Robert:

I have been instructed to forward this concern to your attention and request that comment be made on behalf of the numerous small communities you provide service to in the Bristol Bay Region.

Many of the aircraft that have been serving villages throughout rural Alaska for many years, are now required to use only runways of 3500 and longer. The new DOT 20-Year Transportation Plan will lock in the standard size of a village airport at 3300', which will fall just 200' short of current FAA minimum requirements.

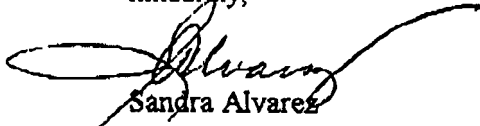
As you are aware, aircraft that are fully equipped for medevac services are unable to fly in and out of the existing airports in most of your villages because of the runway lengths. This results in poor outcomes for emergency patients you are serving, as well as liability issues in that regard. With approval of the proposed plan there would be no way to remediate this situation for twenty years.

Beyond the issue of immediate emergent medical care, there is also the issue of cargo flights which provide for timely and economical delivery of goods that are necessary for local services and village life. Current limitations nearly double the average cost for freight into rural communities. With a 3500' - 4000' runway, communities would be able to use the larger more economical aircraft, directly affecting the local economy, and access to goods. Igiugig is highly dependent upon affordable air cargo because of the unreliability of water levels which on a good year will allow barge traffic from approximately August thru September and on a year with poor levels does not allow for my use of water ways, for freight delivery. Our community routinely flies in items including building materials, fuel, program supplies, and even pieces of heavy equipment. In 1998 alone, the Village Council was responsible for 350,000# of freight delivered to

Igiugig. Since we are only one of the entities dealing with freight (some others include area lodges, the postal service, the Native Corporation, and private entrepreneurs), this gives you some idea of the economic impact that the DOT's long range plan can have on a community and its trickle down effect on the local population, as well as on your own programs as they relate to Mental Health, Alcohol, WIC and others that provide for problems related to social issues.

We encourage you to provide support to your many outlying communities by helping address this need and making the Department of Transportation aware of your own concerns and liabilities if the current plan is adopted.

Sincerely,



Sandra Alvarez
Alternate Health Board Member

CC: Dennis Trefon., BBAHC Subregional Representative
Carl Moses, State Legislature
Lake & Peninsula Borough
DOT Commissioner